



## Pet Play



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### Chapter 1 by SaintSayaka

"Heel, girl."

A fistful of Liriel's pink hair enters my fist. I sigh. She hasn't been very receptive to the idea of the leash.

"Let me go forward, Master," she complains, straining against the strap of leather. I sigh.

"So you can run off again?"

"Nuh-uh. You just go so **sloooow**."

"Liri, this is for your own protection."

"Know what else would be for my own protection? Not boring me to death, Gramps."

"Jesus Christ." I never realized that raising an anthropomorphic creature of my own would be so difficult. Television made it look so easy.

But let's start at the beginning.

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Chapter 2 by Phantom

I was sitting on my couch watching anime on Otaku. My obsession started with /My Little Pony/ but then I started watching real cartoons and realized just how

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bad it was... but I digress. I was busy watching my show about a little /Neko/ catgirl struggle through her everyday school life, when a commercial came on.

There was a lovely little part human part dog on the screen. She was cute. It showed her "owner" playing with her, talking to her, having her fetch things. It being announced as the cure for loneliness. More than a pet, but less drama than an actual human. These Pet Play creatures were fresh on the market too, only recently had the science been approved. I instantly knew I wanted one.

### Chapter 3 by Harlander



I had to build up my courage first. Getting a normal pet was already more responsibility than I really felt comfortable with, and the Pet Play creations seemed like they'd need even more careful keeping.

I chatted with it to my friends down the pub. (Yeah, just because I'm a 30-year-old man who likes animé doesn't mean I'm a complete shut-in.)

"So, I've been thinking about getting one of those Pet Play thingumies," I said, dropping it into the conversation as if it were just a passing fancy. Chris, halfway through a pint of Hobgoblin, almost choked on his drink in surprise. "Oh, what the hell?" he demanded, his eyes narrowing. "You know those things are basically vat-grown slaves, right?"

I narrowed my eyes right back. "The UN Convention on Engineered Lifeforms hasn't returned any conclusions-"

"The UN!" Chris scoffed. "D'you know how long it took for the Universal Declaration of Sentient Rights to be applied to AIs? Tell 'im, Jeff!"

Jeff, or to use his full name, G3-0xFF, swivelled his polished bronze head in my direction. "He's right, you know," Jeff said. "Just think about how long it took you meatbags to outlaw slavery itself." His voice flickered with static - robot embarrassment. "Uh, sorry about calling you

meatbags," he added.

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"No worries, chrome-dom!" Chris replied with a grin.

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"Well, anyway, it's not going to happen," I said, looking down at my phone. "I'll treat my Pet Play Pet with all the dignity and compassion it's entitled to!" I meant it. I was sure some

people would get a Pet Play Play Pet - or whatever the hell the marketing was calling them - just to have a human-like creature that they could treat like crap, and have it be too dim to escape or fight back, but that wasn't for me.

"I just want someone to love me unconditionally," I said wistfully. "Then get a dog, you weirdo," Jeff buzzed.

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